

Thurs, 6/27/96

People

LYNG, JAMES

A celebration of change

Lyng looks back as retirement nears

By John Chaffee
The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — In the 24 years since he came to Duxbury to direct special education and other pupil services, James Lyng has seen major changes in the ways students learn and teachers teach.

"People are becoming comfortable with the idea that there are typical learners and atypical learners," Lyng said as he prepared to retire at the end of this month as Duxbury's assistant school superintendent.

"Kids who 25 years ago would have been labeled hopelessly atypical are today very successful learners," Lyng said.

As an example he cited Jamie McLellan, a special needs student who graduated from Duxbury High School last year, stayed on this year for postgraduate study and who last week produced a successful Beatlemania tribute in the school auditorium.

"Twenty-five years ago, Jamie probably wouldn't have been able to graduate," Lyng said.

Changes in the classroom have made the difference, Lyng said.

"Kids no longer sit in rows taking notes all the time," he said, recalling his own school days in New York and his early teaching experience at a junior high school on Long Island.

"The typical classroom today is a busy place with lots of purposeful activity going on," Lyng said. "Teachers have dramatically increased their repertoire of instructional strategies."

A major reason for the changes, Lyng said, is an increasing realization that learning theory is evolving.

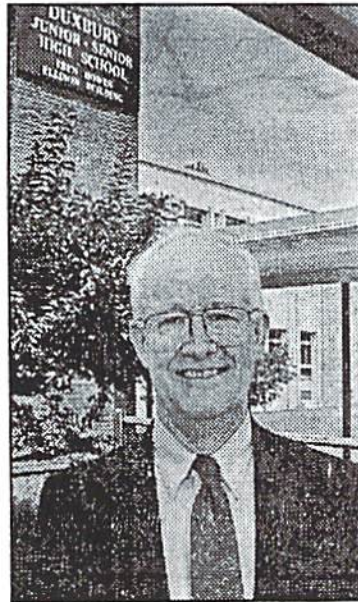
"We're just beginning to learn how people learn," Lyng said.

When he graduated from high school in 1955, Lyng said, only 47 percent of school-age children completed high school.

"High school then was a screening process," Lyng said. "Today it's a necessity."

Lyng, who will spend some of

Duxbury



“
Kids who 25 years ago would have been labeled hopelessly atypical are today very successful learners.
”

— James Lyng,
assistant superintendent

his retirement time teaching at Simmons College in Boston, said Duxbury was the fourth "and best" school system in which he worked after graduating from Iona College.

He praised the town's "level of caring for kids" and said the community's "commitment to its children is unparalleled."

On July 1, Lyng will be succeeded by John K. Kerrigan, who has been director of student services in Norwell since 1986.